

NOTICE OF DECISION

The Decision

I, Andrew Barr, MLA, Minister for Education and Training have decided, pursuant to section 20 of the **Education Act 2004**, that:

COOK PRESCHOOL will close at the end of 2007.

Background

1. On 6 June 2006 I released a proposal titled "*Towards 2020: Renewing our Schools*" (the Proposal).
2. The purpose of the Proposal was to reinvigorate the government school system so that it would remain the first choice for the majority of families. The principles underpinning the Proposal were those of choice, diversity and opportunity. The Proposal outlined the Government's plan for the future provision of public education in the Australian Capital Territory (the Territory). The Proposal provided for a different configuration for Territory schooling provision, involving the integration of preschools into primary schools, the closure of a number of schools and preschools, the amalgamation of others and new structures such as P-3 schools, 5-10 schools, 7-12 schools and collegiate arrangements.
3. The Proposal also included the biggest capital injection into schooling since self-government with \$90 million for capital upgrades and \$20 million for information technology (IT) upgrades.

The Statutory Requirements

4. The *Education Act 2004* (the Act) governs the provision of public education in the Territory. The general principles and objects of the Act are contained in Part 1.2 Section 7 as follows:

7 General principles of Act

- (1) Everyone involved in the administration of this Act, or in the education of children of school age in the ACT, is to apply the principle that every child has a right to receive a high-quality education.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), a high-quality education is based on the following principles:
 - (a) school education and home education provide a foundation for a democratic society;
 - (b) school education and home education should—
 - (i) aim to develop every child's potential and maximise educational achievements; and

- (ii) promote children's enthusiasm for lifelong learning and optimism for the future; and
- (iii) encourage parents to take part in the education of their children, and recognise their right to choose a suitable educational environment; and
- (iv) promote respect for and tolerance of others; and
- (v) recognise the social, religious, physical, intellectual and emotional needs of all students; and
- (vi) aim over time to improve the learning outcomes of students so that the outcomes are free from disadvantage because of economic, social, cultural or other causes; and
- (vii) encourage all children to complete their senior secondary education; and
- (viii) provide access to a broad education; and
- (ix) recognise the needs of Indigenous students;
- (c) innovation, diversity and opportunity within and among schools should be encouraged;
- (d) effective quality assurance mechanisms should be applied to school education;
- (e) government funding should be directed to children through their schools or school system;
- (f) the partnership between the home, community and educational providers should be recognised;
- (g) school communities should be given information about the operation of their schools.
- (3) Everyone involved in the administration of this Act, or in the education of children of school age in the ACT, is to apply the principle that school education—
 - (a) recognises the individual needs of children with disabilities; and
 - (b) should make appropriate provision for those needs, unless it would impose unjustifiable hardship on the provider of the school education.
- (4) Corporal punishment is not allowed in ACT schools.

5. The establishment and operation of government schools is governed by Part 3.2 of the Act, in particular section 20 which provides as follows:

20 Establishing government schools etc

- (1) The Minister may establish government schools and preschools (*government schools*).
- (2) The Minister may decide the kinds of government schools to be established and the educational level or levels for the schools.
- (3) The Minister may establish school-related educational institutions and services (*school-related institutions*).
- (4) The Minister may name, and change the name of, a government school or school-related institution.
- (5) Before closing or amalgamating a government school, the Minister must—
 - (a) have regard to the educational, financial and social impact on students at the school, the students' families and the general school community; and
 - (b) ensure that school communities affected by the closure or amalgamation have been adequately consulted during a period of at least 6 months.
- (6) To ensure that school communities affected by closing or amalgamating a government school are adequately consulted, the Minister must, before a decision is made on the proposal—
 - (a) tell the school communities about the proposal; and
 - (b) listen to, and consider, their views.
- (7) The consultation must be done in a way that gives effect to the following principles:
 - (a) consultation should focus on access to, and the provision of, quality educational opportunities;
 - (b) consultation should be open and transparent;
 - (c) consultation should lead to sustainable decisions by involving effective community engagement;
 - (d) without limiting paragraph (c), consultation should ensure that—

- (i) relevant information is provided in a timely and accessible way to enable maximum community participation in debate about the proposal; and
- (ii) opportunities are provided for feedback about the proposal, especially from families and other people with significant interest in the proposal;
- (e) consultation should include seeking the views of school boards that are likely to be affected by the proposal.

The Consultation Process

6. On 6 June 2006 I announced the establishment of a consultation process in accordance with the Act. The consultation process was developed and conducted in accordance with the ACT Government's Community Engagement Strategy. Attachment A – Consultation Strategy outlines the entire consultation process. I am satisfied that the consultation process gave effect to the principles outlined in s 20(7) of the Act.

Reasons for the Decision

7. I have decided to close or amalgamate a number of schools and preschools in the Territory. The Government will then make a large capital investment of \$90 million for school infrastructure upgrades and provide \$20 million for IT upgrades across all schools so that students now, and into the future, receive the best possible educational programs in contemporary facilities.
8. The fundamental principle that underpins the Government's proposal is to provide children and young people in the Territory with a vibrant, responsive and world-class public education system that is second to none, and that provides the very best chance for each student, no matter which government school they attend.
9. I have decided to close Cook Preschool from the end of 2007 as part of the restructure of the Belconnen South East Region and to facilitate the introduction of new early childhood education models across the Territory. Preschool aged children in the Belconnen South East Region will have access to focused early childhood education at the P-6 schools at Aranda PS, Giralang PS, Hawker PS, Kaleen PS, Maribyrnong PS, Macquarie PS, Weetangera PS and Southern Cross PS commencing in 2008. From 2009 Southern Cross will become a specialised P-2 early childhood school. These early childhood education models will provide innovative educational settings offering continuity in developmentally-appropriate curriculum from preschool into primary school. Significant professional development has been offered by the Early Childhood Executive Officers during 2005 and 2006 to foster closer links and networking opportunities between preschool and primary school staff.
10. Special education and early intervention units will continue to be provided in the region.
11. In reaching this decision I have had regard to the general principles and objects of the Act, the criteria specified in section 20 of the Act and the views expressed by school communities by way of the consultation process as outlined above. An assessment of the pertinent issues, considered by me to be material to this decision, is included in the Findings on Material Questions of Fact.

FACILITY – COOK PRESCHOOL

Findings on Material Questions of Fact

12. Cook Preschool is located within the Belconnen South East Region for the purposes of the *Towards 2020* proposal.
13. The educational provision for the Belconnen South East Region comprises secondary education at Kaleen, Belconnen and Canberra High Schools and senior secondary education at Lake Ginninderra and Hawker Colleges. Years P-6 will be catered for at Aranda PS, Giralang PS, Hawker PS, Kaleen PS, Maribyrnong PS, Macquarie PS, Weetangera PS and Southern Cross PS from 2008. From 2009 Southern Cross will become a specialised P-2 early childhood school. The Hawker collegiate, incorporating closer links between Hawker Preschool, Hawker Primary School, Belconnen High School and Hawker College, will be established in 2008. Special education and early intervention units will continue to be provided in the region.
14. This provision will guarantee a network of innovative and contemporary educational facilities for the region, allowing for a continued focus on high standards and a range of educational opportunities for students.
15. The educational model for the Belconnen South East Region focuses on a regional, rather than a neighbourhood provision of education, more closely reflecting the choices that parents in the Belconnen South East Region have been making over recent years.
16. A number of issues in relation to the educational, financial and social impacts of the Proposal on students, students' families and the school community in relation to Cook Preschool were raised and I had regard to and considered these. The major issues and my findings in relation to those issues are detailed in the following sections.

1. Educational

Parental choice

17. Parents are concerned that by closing Cook Preschool they will lose the opportunity for their children to attend the preschool of their choice.
18. The educational model for the Belconnen South East Region provides a range of schooling options that incorporate an early childhood focus, offering families greater choice, thus allowing them to better meet their child's needs.
19. **I find that when Cook Preschool closes in 2007, parents will be able to access the P-6 schools operating in the Belconnen South East Region at Aranda, Giralang, Hawker, Kaleen, Maribyrnong, Macquarie, Weetangera and Southern Cross from 2008. From 2009 Southern Cross will become a specialised P-2 early childhood school.**

Early childhood education focus

20. The *Towards 2020* proposal offers a model of early childhood education by incorporating the preschool years into the primary school setting. This model ensures continuity of education and social experiences for children, helping them through the transition from preschool to primary school. Focus on this early phase of learning assists children to develop a sense of self and positive self esteem as a member of a broader school community which leads to improved learning outcomes.¹
21. In recent years, stronger links have been developed between preschool and primary schools as part of the preschool primary links initiative. These links have been successfully implemented in a number of settings across the ACT, including Amaroo, Evatt, Fadden, Mawson, Ngunnawal, Palmerston and Richardson. An example of an excellent existing early childhood school model is the P-2 O'Connor Co-operative School, which is at capacity and in demand.
22. **I find that preschool aged children in the Belconnen South East Region will have access to a focused early childhood education at the P-6 schools in the region commencing in 2008, and the Southern Cross P-2 early childhood school from 2009. These options will provide for innovative educational settings and curriculum continuity from preschool into primary school.**

Staff

23. The implementation of a greater early childhood education focus in schools will create further opportunities and pathways for teachers who wish to specialise in supporting a child's early learning. It encourages teachers to work towards further qualifications in their area of interest and to share their professional knowledge and expertise with others. The implementation of the new ACT Curriculum Framework, *Every Chance to Learn*, will provide an opportunity for teachers in the early years of schooling to implement a developmentally-appropriate early childhood curriculum.
24. **Significant professional development has been offered by the Early Childhood Executive team during 2005 and 2006 to foster closer links and networking opportunities between preschool and primary school staff. This will continue in 2007 and beyond.**

2. Financial

Capacity

25. Cook Preschool has a capacity to take 50 students. Over the past years the preschool has been utilised well below its capacity. In February 2004 it had 25 students, in February 2005 it had 18 students and in February 2006 it had 16 students. (ACT Department of Education and Training February Preschool Census) The enrolment registrations for

¹ Elliott, A. (2006) Early Childhood Education – Pathways to quality and equity for all children, Australian Education Review. Victoria.

2007 at Cook Preschool are 18 students, of which 16 are from the Priority Enrolment Area (PEA) and two from out-of-area.

- 26. I find that Cook Preschool is under utilised. There is excess capacity in the Belconnen South East Region for preschool students, and preschool students affected by the closure of Cook will be able to take up places in the P-6 schools in the region from 2008, and the Southern Cross P-2 early childhood school from 2009.**

3. Social Impact

Community social networks

27. Parents were concerned that the closure of the preschool would result in a loss of the community social networks that revolve around the preschool.
- 28. I find that the provision of early childhood education programs within the seven P-6 schools to operate in the region from 2008 and the P-2 early childhood school to commence in 2009 will assist young families to build relationships, friendships and networks with other families and students, which will last for the duration of the child's enrolment at the school. The school community provides parents with opportunities to serve on parent committees, work in classroom support groups and to meet informally with other parents to share experiences and knowledge.**

4. Further Issues Considered

29. I have considered the issues raised in the submissions of the Cook Parents & Citizens Association and Board and the Cook Preschool Parents Association (Cook PS, S5) and the Canberra Preschool Society Inc. (General, S7), as well as those which related to Cook Preschool received from:

Peter Campbell and Sue Martin – Cook PS, S8
Sue Piper – Cook PS, S23 (not published on website)
Lisa Stephan – Cook PS, S4 (not published on website)
Margaret Tregurtha – Cook PS, S26
Evan Tully – Cook PS, S22
Willa Whitewolf – Cook PS, S21

Cook PS, S1 etc. refers to the folio number of the submission in the Department's records.

30. I or my Department have responded to 14 pieces of written correspondence relating to Cook Preschool, recorded in Attachment B – Correspondence Schedule (copies of these documents are held in the Department). I have attended one meeting which dealt with issues related to Cook Preschool (records of meetings are held in the Department).

31. In addition to the issues and impacts referred to above, I have also had regard to and considered the matters set out in Attachment B. The issues described in part 1 of Schedule B relate to Cook Preschool specifically. The issues described in part 2 of Schedule B are matters related to the Proposal generally and not specific to Cook Preschool. The Schedule includes telephone calls (P), Departmental records and correspondence (D), school meetings (SM), Ministerial meetings (M), written correspondence and emails (C) and submissions (S). (All records listed are held in the Department.)

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Barr', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

Andrew Barr, MLA
Minister for Education and Training

CONSULTATION STRATEGY Attachment A

The consultation process

The ACT community consistently demonstrates the value it places on public education and its desire to have input into decision-making on issues that affect the education of children and young people. The Government also has statutory obligations under Section 20(5) of the *Education Act 2004* that require that the Minister for Education and Training engage in a consultation period of at least six months before closing or amalgamating a government school.

Accordingly, at the time of the announcement, the Government advised that a comprehensive community consultation process would be implemented between 6 June and 6 December 2006, in accordance with the *ACT Government Community Engagement Service Charter*¹ and *Community Engagement Manual*².

On 6 June 2006, briefings were provided for government school principals, representatives from the Australian Education Union, the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations, the Community and Public Sector Union, the Canberra Preschool Society and the non-government education sector. In the days following the announcement, School Board Chairs were invited to consult with the principal and the region's Schools Director about the proposal.

Meetings with major stakeholder groups continued throughout the consultation period. A *Towards 2020* project team was established within the Department of Education and Training to manage the consultation process.

Consultation publications

Eight four-page publications entitled *Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools* were distributed to school communities, key stakeholder groups and members of the broader community. These set out the current educational provision and the Government's proposal for each of the educational regions of Canberra: Gunghalin, Belconnen North West, Belconnen South East, North Canberra, South Canberra, Weston Creek, Woden and Tuggeranong.

These documents contained relevant data relating to government schools and preschools. School information covered current enrolment numbers, projected enrolments at 2010 (based on current sites), the enrolment capacity of the school, the

¹ ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (2005), *ACT Government Community Engagement Service Charter*, Canberra

² ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (2005), *Your Guide to Engaging with the Community*, Canberra

percentage of the school utilised, the percentage of students enrolled at each school coming from out of area and the percentage of government school students living in the school's priority enrolment area (PEA) who attended the school.

In addition, information was provided on the proposed regional school provision, including projected student enrolments at 2010 for each school under the proposed arrangements. Also included were details of the date and venue of community forums scheduled for each region, notification of the *Towards 2020* website address and telephone inquiry hotline number and information about how the community could seek clarification on the proposal and provide feedback.

Copies of *Towards 2020* publications were made available at ACT Government Shopfronts and the Gungahlin Library. A leaflet was also distributed to all households in the ACT providing the details of community forums and contact details. An open letter from the Minister to parents and carers in affected schools was included in school newsletters. Letters were also sent to families of students with special needs to invite them to meet with school and special education staff to discuss the particular transitional support needs of their children should the proposal proceed.

Consultation website

The Department of Education and Training's *Towards 2020: Renewing Our Schools* website was activated immediately following the announcement. It contained the same information as the printed publications, as well as a page for each school which gave parents and carers and community members access to information concerning the possible effects on their school community.

Papers on the education models proposed were available for reference and Frequently Asked Questions were updated regularly in response to common questions. Additional statistical and financial information was also posted on the site. The website detailed the avenues available to the community to provide feedback and seek further information.

Community consultation forums

Ten community forums were offered to the public. An evening public forum was held in each of the eight regions during June and July 2006. The Minister for Education and Training outlined the educational, demographic, social and financial criteria drawn upon in developing the proposal and, along with Departmental representatives, answered questions from the floor.

In October, Departmental officers and Ministerial staff attended a community forum for parents and carers of students with special needs. The Minister also attended a *Youth InterACT* forum which was also held to discuss the *Towards 2020* proposal with school age young people and representatives of the Ministerial Youth Council.

Between August and October 2006 a series of six education seminars was held, focusing on the new curriculum framework, early years of schooling, emerging technologies and special education. Over 600 people attended these seminars.

In addition, the Chief Executive and/or Departmental officers attended meetings of the Canberra Preschool Society to discuss preschool issues and of the Indigenous Education Consultative Body to discuss issues for Indigenous students and their families.

Consultation correspondence

The ACT Chief Minister, the Minister for Education and Training and the Department of Education and Training provided over 1650 responses to correspondence received regarding the *Towards 2020* proposal during the consultation period. This included responses to emails, letters and submissions.

Consultation submissions

Over 350 submissions were received on the proposal. Submissions were called for by Friday 3 November 2006 but were accepted until the end of the consultation period on 6 December 2006.

Some communities developed a collaborative approach to preparing submissions. This involved school governance groups, school staff, parents and carers and community members. Consolidated submissions of this kind enabled communities to put forward their views in a coherent and cogent way.

Submissions for which permission was given for publication will be available on the *Towards 2020* website³ from 13 December 2006.

Consultation meetings

Over 700 meetings were held by the Minister, Ministerial staff and Departmental officers during the six-month consultation period. These included group and individual meetings with parents and carers, school communities, members of school boards, Parents and Citizens Councils, Preschool Parents Associations, community members, business groups and other stakeholders.

The Minister visited, or met with representatives of every school proposed for closure and in a number of cases followed up with further meetings with school communities. He met with representatives of school boards, parents' associations, the ACT

³ *Towards 2020*, <http://www.det.act.gov.au/2020/index.htm>

Government School Education Council and community groups. These meetings provided the opportunity for the Minister to hear the views of the community and to consider issues over the length of the consultation period.

CORRESPONDENCE SCHEDULE

Attachment B

Part 1 Cook Preschool

Concern / Issue raised	Correspondence schedule numbers
Educational issues	
Current enrolments claimed to make preschool viable	C12, S5
Projected enrolments good	C12 & C16 (playgroups well subscribed), S5
Loss of good programs	S5
Preschool achieving good educational outcomes - no need for change	C8 (waiting list for preschool) S5
Loss of good facilities	S5
Caring environment	C7
Educational and community model of schooling that should stay open	S8, S21
Questions about data	
Projected enrolments: demographic data claimed to be flawed	C16, S5
Parental choice	
Loss of neighbourhood preschool	S5
Integration of preschools with primary schools	
Positive response to focus on early years	S5
Positive response to integration of preschools with primary schools	C12 (already working at Cook – co-located), C37, S5
Negative response to integration of preschools with primary schools	C18
Financial issues	
Costs to communities	
Proposal claimed to be really about land sales – how will land be used?	C10, C11
Concerns about tenants	C12, S4
What will happen to preschool assets?	C18

How will savings be made?	C22
<i>Social issues</i>	
Loss of neighbourhood preschool (community social networks)	C7
Students will lose opportunity to walk to preschool and get to know their community	C19
Health and environmental impacts if can't walk to preschool	C19, C30
Transport difficulties due to changes (eg no car/one car)	C10, C18, C29, S22
Cook preschool has good parking – not so at other preschools in region	C18, C28, C29, S22, S23
Geographically well located	S5
High level of parent and community involvement	C7, S5
<i>General issues raised</i>	
Why were preschools targeted?	C18
Criteria for proposed closure of particular preschools not explicit	C9, C12, S5
School and preschool already collocated, function as P-6 school	C12, C18, S23, S26

Part 2 Correspondence - General

Concern / Issue raised	Correspondence schedule numbers
<i>Educational issues raised</i>	
Schools proposed for closure	
<i>General:</i>	
Current enrolments make school viable	C17
Loss of specific curricula	C239
Loss of extra curricula programs	C238, S15 (requests protection) P34,
Schools achieving good educational outcomes - no need for change	C170
Loss of good facilities	C9, C17, C43, C51, S20
Protection, storage or new location for school assets, memorabilia etc	C9, C43, C231
Concerns about students coping with change and moving to new schools	C118
Questions of educational, social, and financial impact on students	C128, C134
General opposition	C19, C35, C37, C43, C58, C79, C85, C92, C93, C102, C103, C179, C180, C228, C323, C250, C225, C266, S33
General support	C28, C29, C39, C40, C54, C56, C63, C67, C90, C101, C112, C116, C135, C136, C141, C171/176, C172, C173/174, C175, 198, C208, S27
Concerns about the rights of Yass Valley students	C151
Concerns standard of education is decreasing	C206
Suggested ways to improve education in the ACT	C214
Closures should result in better educational outcomes for students	S21
General lack of educational rationale behind proposal	S26, C247 (requests evidence of educational advantages of new models)
Claimed that there is a lack of resources to implement set schedule	S26
Negative impact of closures to outcomes of students	S30

Educational quality is not related to number of empty places at a school	S37
Questions about data	
Capacity: are demountables counted?	C51, C115, C135, C157, P3
Capacity: modern education requires additional space	S8, S34
Projected enrolments: claimed that demographic data flawed	C33, C72, C75, C77, C100, C119, C167, C242, C243, S30, S33
Claimed that current enrolment figures incorrect	C91, S3
More detail of criteria required	C4, C21, C49, C57, C71, C74, C81, C109, C121
Claimed that capacity figures in accurate	C25, C52, C75, C77, C87, C91, C100, C132, C135, C166, C170, C243, S24, S37, S44, D3
Request data about public attending local schools	C147
Why are some schools with a lower percentage capacity rate staying open?	C157
Enrolments are already decreasing because of proposed closures	C167, C230, C264, C265, S4,
Equity concerns	
Claimed that inequitable impact on indigenous students and families	C43, C240, C255, S30,
Claimed that inequitable impact on low SES students and families	S18, S24, S30, S34, S42
Government must protect the rights of all students	S21
Dealing with equity in 2020	P13
Parental choice	
Claimed that will result in loss of choice across the ACT	C26, C131, C170, S24, S34
Range of models not available in all regions	S34, S36, S44
Larger schools offer more choice	S1, S43
Small schools will no longer be available	S20, S30, S34
Loss of choice within region	S34
Range of models not available in region	C130
Loss of choice locally	C121, S6

Parents don't want their children leaving permanent buildings to go into demountables	C146, S34
PEAS	
PEA system operates against choice (eg some specialist programs only available in one region)	
Enforce student attendance within PEA only	S34
PEAS – timeline for new areas	P31
Lack of information about PEAS	C109
Choice of school - rights	C3, C76, C223, S36
Negative effect on hopeful out of area enrolments	C6, C76, S34
Should address why people don't go to school	C6
Government deciding what schools will close, then thinking of PEAS – should be the other way around	C202
How are the NSW students being considered?	C236
Students not attending local schools because of lack of educational value	S3
Review of PEAS is complicating matters	S34
Out of area priority	P7
Request for info about PEAS	P23
Value of small schools	
Individual attention	C26, C37, C44, C82, C115, C209
Caring & friendly	C197, C238, C239
Suggestions about improved outcomes at small schools	C221
Cost effectiveness	C62
Teach children valuable life skills	C102
General value	C140, C160, C165, S30, S34, D3
Behaviour problems are better dealt with	C238, S3
Small schools assists sense of community	S8

Inconsistent attitude towards small schools (still supporting them in the private sector)	S31
Models	
General	
Too many models	S4
Models will support 'seamless pathways'	S7
Some models will mean too many transition points through schooling	C205
Some students will need to move multiple times because of 2007 closure	C15
Support for models	C15
Requests for evidence of advantages of and disadvantages of models and larger schools	C119, C120, S34
Concerned about disadvantages of larger schools	C154, C160, C221, C237, C264, S17, S24 (provides examples), S29, S30, S39, S39, S42
Criteria for deciding on particular models of schooling	C124, C138
Public needs to be made more aware of educational advantages of new models	C141
No consistency within regions	C146, S7
Expected educational outcomes for new models	C146, S30 (no evidence to suggest improved educational results) S44 (similar outcomes as current model)
Cost of adapting existing schools to cater for the new grades the school will have	C218
Will current programs be lost?	C224
Concerns about lack of choice of particular models	C224, S34 (retain use of larger and smaller schools)
Capacity issues will force students into particular schools	S36
Provide counselling to improve behaviour	S41
Research that supports putting year 6 into high schools	P10
Early years	
Specialist early childhood schools should be P-2, not P-3	C204, S7, S20, S43
Importance of early learning, thus importance of trained staff	S20
Middle Schooling	

Positive response to middle schooling	C238
Model unproved	C48, C218
Loss of Y6 leadership in primary schools	S36, C266
More information about what middle schooling involves	C109
Will students be forced to do year 6 at HS?	C18, C266
Doesn't believe students will attend Stromlo in year 6	C238
Interested in middle schooling, but believes it won't suit all students	S36
7-12 schools	
Loss of successful college model	S11
Less curriculum choice than colleges	S11
Loss of young adult environment	S11
Where did the demand come from?	C144
Existing 11-12 model would be weakened by integrating other years	C149, C167, S11, S29, S34 (support for 11-12), C244, C262 (requests evidence to support 7-12)
ACT schools will miss out on grants if all other states have 11-12	S23
Students with particular needs	
Impact on:	
Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder	C150
Students with disabilities	C210
Concerns about:	
Appropriate facilities and resources	C1, S43, S46
Students coping with change	C235, C245, S36, S42
Unit cohorts remaining together	C1
Continued provision of mainstreaming opportunities	C189, S46
The detrimental effect large schools will have on students with special needs	S34

Availability of schools in their area with special needs unit	C210, S46
Government "targeting" students with special needs	C232
The closing of schools with LSU	C235
Early childhood schools will mean additional transition for students with special needs	S46
Stress for families	S46
Need more time for planning and transition	C246, C259, D1
Heard rumours of special ed funding reduction	P9
Heard point system to change – harder for students to get into units	P9
Staff matters	
Loss of staffing positions, including executive opportunities	C52, C161
Teacher stress	S9, S34
Bigger classes	C185
Timing of transfer outcomes	C230
Effect on school staff	C104
Concerns about future working conditions	C137
Request for funding to go towards teachers and assistants	S13 (not technology), S19
Concern that teachers not involved in the development of proposals	S13
Concern that professional development opportunities will be lost	S20
Concern that staff will not have early childhood training	S20
Government needs to address the lack of social recognition teachers have in the community	S21
Provide a career path for gifted teachers	S41
Provision for minimum number of teachers	S43
How many staff at schools will be affected	P2
Preschools	

Desirability of childcare and long day care programs associated with preschools	C13, C234, S6, S28
Criteria not clear	C108
Integration with PS needs to ensure appropriate structures take place	S6
Government doesn't have a commitment to early childhood education	S20
All viable preschools should remain open, even if their primary school closes	S120
All students should have the right to government preschool	S20
Preschool registration should be earlier	P8
Financial issues raised	
Questions of costs data	
Schools proposed for closure	C108, S6, S30
Claims that DET school costs figures inaccurate	S30, S37
Proposal does not take a cost- benefit approach (including costs to families and community)	C264, S26
Issues with cost analysis	C128, C129, C211, S3, S34, S44
Put more money into schools	C103
Don't close schools to make money for dragway	C132
Closure of preschools results in small savings	S7
Cost per student doesn't reflect special needs provision	S9
School configuration based on economic factors	S19
Requests more money spent on upgrading existing schools	S24, S41
Waste of public resources	S31, P12 (who is paying for ads?)
Costs to families	
Transport	C239, C256, C258, S13, S14, S18, S20, S30
Costs of changing schools eg uniforms	C148, P4 (heard "rumour" about support)
Advice on Transition funding (eg when known; how much)	C115, C126, C150, S18, P10

Ask parents to pay more taxes to save schools	C73
Increased costs may result in more truancy amongst disadvantaged students	S18
Costs to communities	
Loss of community resources eg sporting fields	C119, C168, C206, S37, S48
Loss of school impact on house prices	S14, S30, S44, P7
Effects on business re loss of local shops	C153, C213, C264, S30, S48
Proposal really about land sales	C33, C47
How will vacated land be used? (may provide suggestion)	C207, C234, C248 (request for childcare use), C249, C253, C257, S2 (use for cheap accommodation for needy), S22, S30 (suggests ideas), S34, S44, P10 (vandalism concerns), P21, P32,
Employment effects	S30, P2 (contractors)
Questions about what is going to happen to P&C funds, excess uniforms, etc.	C260
Tenants	
Building used as a homeless shelter	C114
Social issues raised	
General	
Loss of neighbourhood school (community social networks)	C5, C30, C86, C98, C147, C264, S16, S30, S44
Students will lose friends	C27, C86, C115
Loss of school as 'heart of community'	C9, C27, C30, C98, C100, C105, C130, S16
Stress for students with special needs	C7, C9, C270
Loss of parental involvement	S20
Community support for schools to remain open	C131, S16
School closures will effect community and parents generally	C166, S24
Stress for parents and community	C169, C212
Request for social impact assessment	C226

Schools in each suburb not necessary – community is broader	S1
Co-location of early childhood services in proposal	S5
Community contribution for fundraising	S20
Transition support requested	S30, S40, S43, P3
Transport	
Transport difficulties due to changes (eg no car/one car)	C148
Environmental impact of families needing to use transport	C262, S30
Student health concerns as no longer walking to school	C30, C43, C82, C239, C262, C264, S16, S20, S34,
Safety concerns (eg parking, road crossings, bicycle paths, traffic lights)	C43, C197, C238, S14, S16, S17, S24 (requests upgrades), S30
Inadequacy of school bus services	C109, C183
Wanting free bus transport	C30
What provision will be made to ensure travel arrangements will not be a burden	C151
Travel on public transport isn't safe	C151, S16
General transport issues with increased traffic	S9, S24
School bus scheme	P13
General issues raised	
Timeframe too short for 2007 implementation	C5, C8, C42, C45, C80, C81, C89, C95, C97, C119, C125, C169, C197, C230, C238, C245, C259, C262, S6, S20, S29, S34, S37, S46
Government should have consulted before developing proposal	C45, C203, C262, C264, S13, S42, S48
Individuals or groups did not have their views heard	C12 (old tech process)
Decisions were already made (consultation not genuine)	C130, C143, C158, C225, C237, S8, S26, S29, S34, S37, S38
Criteria for proposed closure of particular schools not explicit	C3, C138, C216 (requests statement of reasons), C262, S13, S17, S30, S34
Unclear whether outcomes data (eg ACTAP) were used to inform proposal	C10, C70, C170
DET using data not available to public to inform recommendations	C193, C245, S9, S19, S42, S44
Requests for information	C2, C11, C16, C22, C32, C35, C38, C46, C49, C60, C61, C68, C69, C83, C94, C108, C110,

	C117, C121, C126, C127, C128, C129, C134, C155, C157, C159, C161, C182, C188, C191, C204, C211, C216, C219, C255, S34, P24
Against sale to private schools	C31, C33, C36, C115, C215
Lack of an experienced minister	C104
Need for objective report/study	C64, S48
Towards 2020 – anti live in Canberra campaign	C86, C185, S16, S37
Consultation period not long enough	C117, C125, C143, C170 (bad timing), C212, C262, S34, S42
Request evidence of consultation- believes there is a lack of consultation	C117, C146
Requests support with submissions	C139
Government needs to do more planning	C144, C200, C259
How government determines funding for non-government schools	C142, C176
Honesty with community required	C146, C207, C264, S31 (explain terminology) C57 (suggests FAQ's)
Requests sensitivity for dates and method of announcement of the final decision	C201, S38 (inconsiderate)
Losing people to non-government schools	C203, C261, S4, S34, S36, S37, D3
Requests information on who and how the submissions would be analysed	C217 (requests independent party) C219
Close schools sooner rather than later	S1
Concerns over language of proposal	S7
Questions priority of government	S17
Offers suggestions to reverse decline in government school enrolments	S23
Suggested ways to improve demographics of areas with closing schools	S23
Question relationship between Towards 2020 and territory plan	S26
Should have undertaken risk analysis	C 240, C255, S34
Requests government to conduct surveys to gain information from parents, students, and staff	S40
Suggests DET discuss school closures with other organisations	S40
Family moving to ACT- needs to know what's happening	P5

Issues with savings as costs	D1
West Belconnen only open P-6 in 2009 – Request for P-10 “as promised”	P19
“Schools Location Bill”	C263
Request for compensation for schools that were proposed to close but didn’t	C265

Summary of proposal	Schedule number
Review assistance schemes to minimise effects of school closures on disadvantaged and homeless students	S18
Delay decision till 08 to allow full public enquiry and time to manage change	S18
Leave Narrabundah, Charnwood & Southern Cross as P-3 schools	S18
Establish a revitalised school on the Holder site (instead of Duffy)	S18
Intergenerational facility on site possibly including ‘independent government school’	S22
Use excess space more productively to support community benefit	S30
Strengthen public education through development of community schools	S30
Use submissions as starting point for extended process to support more informed decisions: no closure of amalgamations until 2007	S34
One-stop-shop sites for families incorporating infant and day care, preschool to Year 5 and before and after school care.	S34
A strategy that includes smaller and larger schools.	S34
Development of guidelines for future proposed closures and amalgamations.	S34
Requires a revisit of the strategy in 2020 as a matter of urgency	S44
Suggests that different aspects of education system be considered within a hierarchical framework – at a local, subdistrict, district or metropolitan level	S44

The correspondence schedule numbers refer to correspondence and briefings for Ministerial meetings on the Proposal, held in the ACT Department of Education and Training. Correspondence is coded as follows:

- P Telephone calls
- D Departmental correspondence
- M Ministerial meetings
- C Written correspondence and emails
- S Submissions

P1 etc. refers to the folio number of the record of the telephone call held in the Department’s records.
D1 etc. refers to the folio number of Departmental records and correspondence.

SM1 etc. refers to the folio number of records for school meetings

M1 etc. refers to the folio number of records for Ministerial meetings.

C1 etc. refers to the folio number of written correspondence or emails held in the Department's records.

S1 etc refers to the folio number of the submission held in the Department's records.

